

我是真葡萄树 —— 约翰福音 15:1-11

I am the True Vine — John 15:1-11

Scripture Reading: John 15:1-11, Isaiah 11:1-10

John 15:1-11 (NASB1995)

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. 9 Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

Background: Upper Room Discourse

1. This is Jesus’ final words before crucifixion; this is the warmest room in the world.
2. Jesus has by now left the room, heading toward Gethsemane. "Get up, let us go from here." (John 14:31)

Verses 1-2: Two Types of Branches

1. “I am the true vine, you are the branches”? Nope. Please read carefully to see what Jesus emphasizes in this verse.
 - a. This is, in the first place, a story between Jesus and His Father.
2. Two types of branches, two ways to cut them.
 - a. Cutting off: fake Christians will be judged by the Father.
 - b. Pruning: true Christians will be sanctified by God’s Word.

Verse 3: Already clean

1. Jesus’ word (the gospel) is the initial pruning which cleanses us through the forgiveness of sin and joins us to the body of Christ.
2. His word is also the purpose of all God’s continual pruning work in our lives, so that His word may bear more fruit through us.

Verses 4-5: Abide in me

1. It’s a command: Jesus commands us to strive diligently to remain in Him.

- a. The reason we must strive diligently is because there is resistance. This point seems to have stretched beyond the metaphor of natural branches.
 - b. The things we must strive diligently to do is to draw near to God and to obey Him.
 - c. Spend time and energy to focus on God, and He will certainly draw near to you.
(James 4:8 - Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.)
2. I abide in you: but in verse 7 it says, “**My words** abide in you”.
 - a. Jesus is so identified with His Word that the abiding of His Word in our life is the way we have Him abide in us.
 3. It’s also a warning: failing to abide in Him results in fruitlessness.
 - a. Can true Christians who have been saved also experience such a tragic condition? Yes. Because these words are said to the “**you**” in verse 3.
 - b. It is precisely to such weak and fruitless Christians that Jesus is exhorting over and over again.

Jesus is being quite realistic here, talking to real Christians.

Verse 6: Burned branches

This is a warning to fake Christians. If non-abiding and fruitlessness is the pattern of your life, this verse should make you tremble.

Verses 9-11

1. ‘I have loved you’: He has told us so by His own word.
 - a. Love needs to be expressed and affirmed, and that’s why God wrote down His works in the Bible. (application for families in Chinese culture)
 - b. The expression of love ensures that all Jesus’ words originate from His love and are for the benefit of the branches.
2. ‘Just as the Father has loved me’: the only thing that can measure Jesus’ love for us is the Father’s love for Him.
3. ‘My joy’: exclusive joy for the new creation: rejoice in what Jesus rejoices in.

Back to verse 1: I’m the true Vine

1. The Old Testament often uses vine or vineyard to represent the Israelites who are expected to bear good fruit before God (Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:8). However, the Israelites failed to faithfully bear fruit and hence were judged by God.
2. Jesus is the true Vine.
 - a. Those who are in Him will never die and will never be forsaken by the Father, for the curse and abandonment have already been borne by Him.